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THE APPOINTED

Lovers of the intriguingly offbeat will appreciate Daniel Wachsmann's film, in which sleazy nightclub magician Shuli Rand is a cult rabbi's son who has repudiated religion for fake miracles. But when the enigmatic, beautiful Ronit Alkabetz enters his life and imitates his illusions — unaided by any backstage props — his life changes once again. His father dies, and he's forced back to the sect to lead the disciples. He's followed by the mysterious Alkabetz, who appears to love him, and in her presence he develops extraordinary healing powers (his look of utter wonder as he causes a mute baby to cry is truly touching). Soon his people are standing in line to see him, and, despite a not-quite-clear segment just before the tinged-with-irony ending, this is an excellently acted, beautifully photographed, touched-with-humor, set-in-Israel film, whose mystical mood will continue to haunt you long after it's over. (July 27, 8:15 pm, Castro; Aug. 8, 6 pm, UC Theatre)

—Zena Jones

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